UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/305
22 March 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 22 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of section (a) of that part of the press release issued following the seventieth session of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council, held on 14 and 15 March 1999 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, that concerns the occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Excerpt from the press release issued in Riyadh on 15 March 1999 following the seventieth session of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and relations with Iran

(a) The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates

The Ministerial Council reviewed developments with regard to the issue of Iran's occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates. Noting that Iran was continuing to make unacceptable claims concerning the islands, that it had conducted provocative military exercises in the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates and that it had opened a building for an Iranian municipality and an educational complex on Abu Musa with a view to perpetuating the occupation and imposing a fait accompli, the Council renewed its affirmation that it is important for the Islamic Republic of Iran to translate its declared desire, under President Mohammad Khatami, to improve its relations with the GCC member States into practical and concrete measures, in both word and deed. It should do this by responding candidly to the earnest and sincere calls issued by His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, by the GCC member States, by the Damascus Declaration countries, by the League of Arab States, by regional and international organizations and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a peaceful settlement to the dispute over the three islands, in accordance with the relevant conventions and covenants and the norms of international law, to be reached through direct negotiations or by referral to the International Court of Justice as the instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States. This is the way to build confidence and strengthen security and stability in the region.

In this connection, the Council reaffirmed the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and reiterated its unconditional support for all the peaceful measures the United Arab Emirates is taking to restore its sovereignty over the islands. The Council again urged the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the islands, to desist from pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by force, to cease the construction of Iranian installations on the islands for the purpose of altering their demographic composition, to rescind all unilateral measures taken in the past and remove all of the installations built and to resolve the dispute by peaceful means in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including agreement to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice.

Recalling the communiqué adopted at its twenty-third special session on 4 March 1999 concerning the Iranian military exercises on the occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates and in its territorial waters, the Council urges Iran to desist from acts of provocation that constitute a flagrant

violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates, pose a grave threat to security and stability in the region and are endangering intraregional and international shipping in the Arabian Gulf.